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ABSTRACT

This book suggests that the welfare of children has been routinely subordinated to the interests and supposed rights of various groups of adults (parents, teachers, taxpayers, and advocates). It suggests that a truly child-centered approach to education reform would yield dramatically different conclusions regarding the morality and constitutionality of government initiatives to improve public and private schooling in the United States. It makes the case that state funding of religious and other private schools is not only permissible, but also mandatory as a moral and constitutional right of the children already in private schools. The book demonstrates the necessity of attaching to that funding robust standards for the content and nature of instruction and for the treatment of students. The book suggests that vouchers represent an opportunity for states to accomplish what they have been unable to do in the past, namely, to bring academic accountability to religious schools, many of which fail to provide a good secular education. It views current voucher programs as morally irresponsible and unconstitutional because they require almost nothing of recipient schools in return for funding. (SM)